###### INTRODUCTION

The day-to-day operation of a company depends on memos that circulate within and among its department. These documents report on various problem and present information about products, methods, and equipment. This unit focuses on the elements of memos.

###### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are to:

1. enable students to know the elements of memos by filling in the missing information.

2. enable students to adopt a suitable register when writing a memo by finding weaknesses

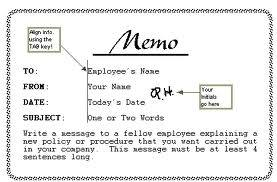
of a memo and rewriting it.

###### LEARNING OUTCOME

###### The objectives of this unit are to:

###### understand the elements that make up a memo

###### be familiar with the language conventions of a memo

6.0 MEMO

**INTRODUCTION**

A memo is a short and generally used to provide or ask for information and to report everything from results of tests to announcement of meetings. In industry, a memo must be written clearly for internal issues.

**PURPOSE**

**A memo is used as a written reminder or to convey a short proposal or some basic information.**

Memos have a twofold purpose:

1. Bring attention to problems

by informing specific information in order to take an

action

1. Solve problems.

**6.1 THE ELEMENTS OF MEMOS (CONVENTIONAL)**

Follow these guidelines to set up a memo or memo report.

1. **Memo Headings**
2. Fill in the memo heading with relevant information: To, From, Date and Subject
3. Follow the format set by the company
4. **The Body**
5. Set the background
6. Main point
7. Secondary information
8. **The Closing**
9. Set the deadlines, course of actions or persons to contact.
10. Subscription (Yours sincerely) & Signature (name and designation).

* All memos consist of three sections: **the heading, body and closing.**

### Template 1

**MEMORANDUM**

To : (readers' names and job titles)

From : (writer name and job title)

Date : (complete and current date)

Subject : (what the memo is about, highlighted in some way)

In order to make interoffice communications easier, please adhere to the following

guidelines for writing effective memos:

☑ Clearly state the purpose of the memo in the subject line and in the first

paragraph.

☑ Keep language professional, simple and polite.

☑ Use short sentences.

☑ Use bullets/numbers if a lot of information is conveyed.

☑ Proofread before sending.

☑ Address the memo to the person(s) who will take action on the subject, and CC

those who need to know about the action.

☑ Attach additional information: don’t place it in the body of the memo if possible.

☑ Please put this format into practice immediately.

Yours sincerely,

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(NAME & DESIGNATION)

**Template 2**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Introduction**  **Main point**  **Secondary Information**  **Action/Closing**  **Subscription/**  **Signature/**  **Designation** | **MEMORANDUM**  **HEADINGS**  To : All Staff  From : Ismail Ahmad, Operation Manager  Date : 12 June 2010  Subject : Operating Instructions for New Copying  Machine    A new photocopier has been installed in the general office. All staff are welcome to use it.  To ensure the copier's survival, it is important to keep the following procedures in mind:   * Use the machine for no longer than 30 minutes at a time * After use, allow the machine to cool for at least five minutes * Make sure the switch is turned off after use.   Please speak to me if you have any questions about the machine.  Yours sincerely,  *Ahmad Ismail*  (Operation Manager) |
|  |  |

**Focus on memo via E-MAIL**

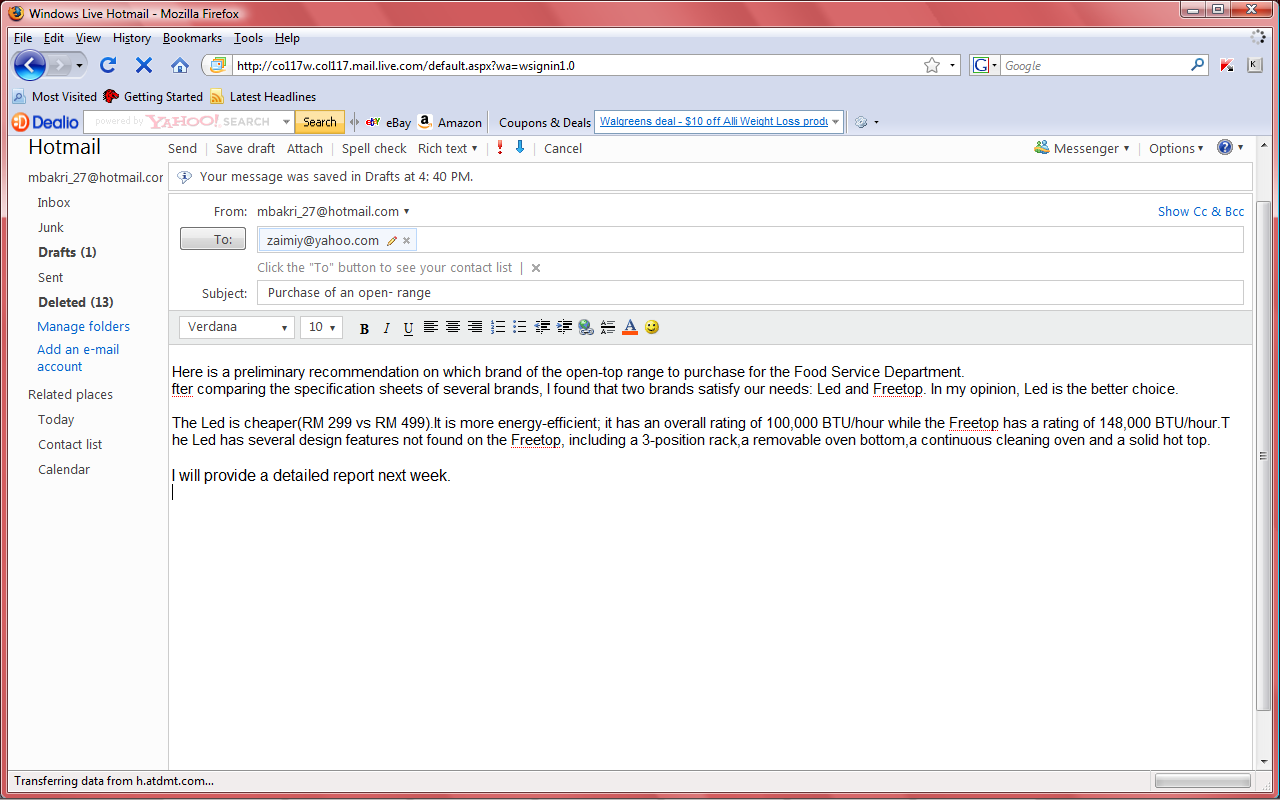
**E-mail :**

* Is used in local networks in corporations and government agencies.
* Is gradually creating a niche as a common method of interpersonal communication, replacing the letter and phone calls.
* Is often used.

**How to write effective memo via e-mail:**

* Write a clear subject line-Almost all systems give you a space to fill with subject phrase. Do so, clearly. In a subject line, state content.
* The content and closing will be similar to the conventional memo.

**Template 3**

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**6.2 LANGUAGE OF MEMOS**

**6.2.1 Vocabulary**

As in all business and technical communication, the language of memos should be clear and concise. At the same time memos should have a friendly tone.

When writing a memo, you should use

* the common or usual word.
* simple sentence constructions.
* few words and short sentences.

Fig. 1 Examples of inappropriate memos writing and suggested alternative.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Examples that you should avoid:  You are herewith reminded that adequate parking facilities are provided for categories 2, 3 and 4 as classified according to the Personnel Schedule of this company, enclosed herewith, in the parking lot designated B which has been reserved for the exclusive use of same. You are kindly requested to desist from stationing your class B vehicles (see ROV classification) in locations other than the above-mentioned car park.   * *Too long and complicated* * *Misused words and expression* * *No paragraph* | Suggested alternative:  Employees who are classified under categories 2, 3 and 4 are requested to park their cars in car park B only.  A copy of the Personnel Schedule of the company showing the classification of employees is enclosed.   * *Precise and concise* * *Only specific information* * *With paragraph* |
| I am writing in connection with the interviews you will be conducting to select personnel to man the reception counters.   * *Misused of words and expression* | I am writing about the interviews you will be conducting to select receptionists.   * *Very clear and friendly tone* |

**6.2.2 STYLE**

Examples

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Style too elaborate for memos***  We are grateful for your prompt reply to our request. We are enclosing a questionnaire for you to complete and we should appreciate it if you could return it to us at your earliest convenience. | ***Style suitable for memos***  Thank you for replying promptly to my request for help in the survey. Please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to me as soon as possible. |
| ***Style too officious for memo***  Your memo of the 22nd refers. Kindly complete the enclosed questionnaire and return same to the undersigned soonest. | ***Style suitable for memo***  I refer to your memo dated 22 August. Could you please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to me as soon as possible. |

Although the paragraphs in a memo may be numbered and the information

can be given in numbered points, you should write in complete sentences, not in note

form. This is because the abbreviated language of notes can be confusing and give rise

to misunderstandings. You may be able to understand your own notes, but they may not

be easily or correctly understood by someone else.

**Example:**

**Leave with Cheng-if not available wait Monday.**

Could mean:

1. Please leave it (them) with Mr. (Mrs., Miss) Cheng. If it (they) is

(are) not available today, please wait till Monday to deliver it (them).

1. Please leave it (them) with Mr. (Mrs. Miss) Cheng. If he (she) is not

available today, please wait till Monday.

1. Please go with Mr. (Mrs., Miss) Cheng. If he (she) is not available,

please wait till Monday to go.

The time saved when writing your memo may lead to time lost when the receiver

puzzles out the meaning, seek clarification or even takes the wrong action. The

6.3



ACTIVITY 1

Rearrange all the items in the right box to the left box to form a correct memo.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Move items into this column | Items to move |
|  | Subject: Sick leave certificate |
|  | Message: |
|  | Please confirm that the cost of medicine is covered by company health scheme. |
|  | In order to receive sick pay, I need to send in my doctor’s note. |
|  | I attach the doctor’s note. |
|  | Thank you. |
|  | From: Salmah Mansor, Sales |
|  | To: Adli Rahman, Human Resources |
|  | I was sick yesterday, and therefore I couldn’t come to work. |
|  | Date : 10 June 2010 |

**ACTIVITY 2**

Pair-work

I. Study each of the following and decide whether it is written in a style and tone suitable for a memo. If not, is it because too informal or too formal; too abrupt or too long winded?

1. You are to return all equipment borrowed from the maintenance office immediately.
2. After a careful consideration of your requests and with all due examination of the circumstances, we beg to inform you that they cannot be acceded to.
3. Please could you return the enclosed form before 31 October as we would like to introduce the new procedure as soon as possible.
4. Your memo 24/9 refers. I submit herewith Form 22C duly completed as requested by your goodself.
5. While it is a matter of considerable difficulty to estimate with any degree of certainty the possible advantages which might accrue from our company’s conversion to the computerisation of its accounts (if and when such a move is decided upon), on the whole, and I am taking a long-term view, it seems not unlikely that the prospects for processing increasing numbers of accounts while at the same time reducing the personnel hours would not be unpromising.

II. Rewrite the above messages so that they are appropriate for a memo.

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
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3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**ACTIVITY 3**

Work with a partner and write an email memo from Sonia Tahir, Manager of the Human Resources Department. Use these notes:

- Mr. Kamal Khan of Pacific Enterprises

- Visit our corporate headquarters and factory

May 5-7

- Reema Danish will show him around

- Be ready to answer Mr. Khan’s questions

****TASK 1 : **Group work**

Write a memo in reply to the memo from the Sales Manager of Apel Engineering to the Production Manager. You may use the information in the notes below:

* Will Mega take delivery of 1000 in mid October, 1000 in late October? Cannot guarantee delivery of 2000 by mid October-only 1000 numbers of one component for BNX 508 now in stock. More have been ordered-will probably arrive in late Oct.
* Offer 30% reduction on quoted prices if necessary to compensate for late delivery.
* Profit margin much reduced but understands Mega’s business is important to us.

SUMMARY

In this chapter we have studied that...

1. Writing a memo with appropriate elements is essential to convey the message clearly.

**REFERENCES**

* 1. Bailey, P.E. (2002). Writing & Speaking At Work: A Practical Guide for Business Communications (2nd ed.). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.